

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Decision to extend HVOSS contract for an additional 3 months from 1 st January 2025
Date of decision:	2 nd December 2024
Decision maker:	Corporate Director Community Wellbeing
Authority for delegated decision:	The Chief Executives Scheme of Delegation CW-08 – Commissioning, quality assistance and contract management relating to all ages.
Ward:	All wards
Consultation:	Consultation has taken place with Service Director All Age Commissioning, Talk Community Lead, Legal and HVOSS CEO
Decision made:	To extend the existing contract with HVOSS, to provide a strategic partnership role within and for the third sector, for an additional three months from 1 st January 2025 to 31 st March 2025 The maximum cost will be £23,500
Reasons for decision:	<p>HVOSS currently provide a service to the community, for which they have an established brand and reputation. Substantial work has been undertaken to develop the service and HVOSS have a clear understanding of development areas across Herefordshire.</p> <p>The original contract was commissioned at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic and the specification was developed with some urgency and in response to the council’s commitment to invest in the sector and further develop the Talk Community programme and building on the work of communities during the floods and Covid-19 crisis.</p> <p>Since the original contract award, it has been extended for an additional 2 years between 2022 and 2024.</p> <p>Following research into how best to continue to support our VCSE organisations and taking into account ongoing financial constraints that council faces, we intend to go out to the market by way of an open procurement to identify an organisation able to continue with this support for VCSE.</p> <p>The proposed 3-month extension to the existing contract with HVOSS will enable the procurement activity to take place and an appropriate provider be identified to continue the important work without any break in service.</p> <p>The council is clear that there is an ongoing need to support the development and resilience of community and voluntary organisations, in addition to the work of Talk Community and the developing Integrated Care Systems.</p> <p>In the longer term the council is exploring the development and implementation of a VCSE commissioning framework. This can be developed in collaboration with</p>

	<p>VCSE and health colleagues to provide a flexible solution for short-term funding challenges and enable long-term investments in the sector. By working together, we have the opportunity to create a charter that outlines our partnership with VCSE organizations, covering commissioning and broader elements.</p>
<p>Equality Considerations</p>	<p>Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the ‘general duty’ on public authorities is set out as follows:</p> <p>A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act. • advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. • foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. <p>The decision does not discontinue any service and has no detrimental impact to eligible service users under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that we are paying ‘due regard’ in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. All partners are aware of their statutory requirements in regard to equality legislation.</p> <p>This decision will help to ensure that Herefordshire’s VCSE organisations and groups, many of them working with and supporting some of the most vulnerable groups in our communities, will continue to be able to access guidance and support in attracting funding, developing their organisations and accessing volunteers to assist with the provision of their services.</p>
<p>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</p>	<p>Legal advice has been sought regarding this 3-month extension to the existing HVOSS contract. The extension is permissible, due primarily to unavoidable delays in the necessary procurement activity, but there can be no further extensions to this contract beyond the end of the 3-month period, which will end on 31st March 2025</p>
<p>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</p>	<p>Do nothing: Not recommended – The State of the Sector report highlights the need for a unified strategic voice to help the voluntary and community sector share information, amplify their influence, and engage with other sectors. Without this, the sector risks fragmentation and loss of connectivity, hindering Talk Community's progress and objectives.</p>
<p>Details of any declarations of interest made:</p>	<p>None</p>

Signed..... Date:

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